"Mainstreaming Social Dimension in the European Higher Education Area (EHEA): Implementation of a National Strategy"

Country Profile for the international Peer Learning Activity

Wednesday, 7 October 2020
University of Applied Arts, Vienna or online

We therefore commit to developing policies that encourage and support higher education institutions to fulfil their social responsibility and contribute to a more cohesive and inclusive society through enhancing intercultural understanding, civic engagement and ethical awareness, as well as ensuring equitable access to higher education.

Bologna Paris Communiqué 2018

This Peer Learning Activity co-funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research and the ERASMUS+ KA3-Project „INternationalisation/INclusion/INnovation: Towards high-quality inclusive mobility and innovative teaching & learning in an internationalised Austrian Higher Education Area – 3-IN-AT" will focus on mainstreaming the social dimension through National Strategies and strategic measures. It is designed as a follow-up to the Peer Learning Activity that took place in Linz (Austria) in March 2017, when Austria launched its "National Strategy for the Social Dimension in Higher Education". The PLA in 2017 aimed at gathering information on the development and implementation of National Strategies in member countries of the EHEA. In preparation of the PLA, participating countries had been asked to fill in a survey on their efforts in developing national strategies on the social dimension in order to create country profiles.

To continue the work from 2017 another PLA will be held on 7 October 2020 for which these country profiles are now updated. This is why this country profile template is sent to those countries, which participated in this first round in 2017 in a first step. The questions asked in this template, as well as the topics that will be worked on during the Peer Learning Activity are based on the **draft of the Principles and Guidelines to Strengthen the Social Dimension of Higher Education in the EHEA produced by the BFUG Advisory Group 1 for Social Dimension (date: 24 June 2020).**

This document takes as its starting point the definition of the social dimension provided in the 2007 London Communique, namely that <u>the composition of the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should correspond to the heterogeneous social profile of society at large</u> in the EHEA countries. The Advisory Group for Social Dimension also goes beyond the before mentioned definition and has enlarged the definition by stressing that the social dimension encompasses creation of inclusive environment in higher education that fosters equity, diversity, and is responsive to the needs of local communities. (p. 1)

The social dimension of higher education is, as described above, meant to be beneficial for individuals and for society as a whole, the BFUG Advisory Group 1 for Social Dimension explains this as follows:

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[…] Increased participation of vulnerable, disadvantaged and underrepresented groups in higher education produces wider benefits with respect to decreased social welfare provision, improved health outcomes and increased community involvement. Collectively, these wider benefits sustain cohesive, democratic societies where social justice, public good, public responsibility and social mobility prevail. Graduate qualifications delivered to a wider pool of citizens means better employment prospects, higher earnings premiums and the passing on of an appreciation for the benefits of higher education to the next generation and to their local communities. Beyond reaching the commitments made by the EHEA, taking a holistic and proactive approach to improving the social dimension of higher education further serves to accelerate progress in attaining the UN Sustainable Development Goals. (p. 1-2)

The Peer Learning Activity planned for 7 October tries to encompass all 10 guidelines; however, we want to mention those that are central to the work of the PLA:

1. The social dimension should be central to higher education strategies at system and institutional level, as well as at the EHEA and the EU level. *Strengthening the social dimension of higher education and fostering equity and inclusion to reflect the diversity of society is the responsibility of a higher education system as a whole and should be regarded as a continuous commitment.*

2. Legal regulations or policy documents should allow and enable higher education institutions to develop their own strategies to fulfil their public responsibility towards widening access to, participation in and completion of higher education studies.

4. Reliable data is a necessary precondition for an evidence-based improvement of the social dimension of higher education. *Higher education systems should define the purpose and goals of collecting certain types of data, taking into account the particularities of the national legal frameworks. Adequate capacities to collect, process and use such data to inform and support the social dimension of higher education should be developed.*

6. Public authorities should provide sufficient and sustainable funding and financial autonomy to higher education institutions enabling them to build adequate capacity to embrace diversity and contribute to equity and inclusion in higher education.

10. Public authorities should engage in a policy dialogue with higher education institutions and other relevant stakeholders about how the above principles and guidelines can be translated and implemented both at national system and institutional level.

Country Survey

Country: Croatia

Authority in charge with "Social Dimension": Ministry of Science and Education

Person in charge/contact: Ana Tecilazić Goršić (ana.tecilazicgorsic@mzo.hr) and Marina Matešić (marina.matesic@mzo.hr)

Rationale for your strategy: Why do you work on/with a national Strategy and/or a coherent set of measures and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension? Would you say that it addresses one or more of the principles mentioned in the introduction? If yes, which? (Indicate the numbers, e.g. Principle 6., Principle 10.)

The national Strategy for Education, Science and Technology (2014) stipulated that the social dimension is one of the key objectives for the policy developments in higher education, and that a specialized strategic document should be developed taking into account all levels of education. In particular the Objective 6 of "upgrading student standard with special care for social dimension is directed to making higher education accessible to all". This objective has been set up as a part of a broader, European policy with the aim that the social profile of "the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education should reflect the diversity of our population" (the London Communiqué 2007). For that purpose a National Group for Social Dimension in Higher Education was set up in 2015. The Group developed a document Vulnerable and underrepresented groups of students, and National Plan for improving social dimension in higher education, both adopted by the Government in 2019.

The Plan addresses all of the principles mentioned in the Principles and guidelines. Namely, our Ministry has provided support to BFUG Advisory group for social dimension and one of two co-chairs in charge of developing the document, Mr. Scukanec, is also a member of our National Group, assuring in such a way that documents are compatible and improving one another.

Does your national definition of "Social Dimension" correspond to the one above quoted from the EHEA BFUG AG1 draft Principles and Guidelines?

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a.) Yes, it (mostly) corresponds, we define it as follows:

b.) No, it does not correspond, we define it as follows: There is no a concrete definition of social dimension in the national steering documents.

Please give a short explanation of the status of your national strategy and/or your coherent set of measures and tools and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension (ongoing discussions, target groups involved, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, adjustments…)

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a.) The national strategy was adopted in 2019 alongside two more documents: Underrepresented and vulnerable groups of students and Guidelines for improving

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> support to disabled students. Since then the Ministry has implemented several measures. Based on acquired studies and experience, we are planning to evaluate the Plan and adjust some of the measures in the next national policy document due in 2021.

How has your strategy been implemented; which measures have been put into practice and how?

The Plan is in its mid-stage and most of the goals have already been implemented to some level. For instance, implementing social dimension within quality assurance procedures has already been done before the adoption of the Plan (as the draft plan was developed in 2016), scholarships or additional points in scholarship calls for several vulnerable groups (Roma, gender underrepresented in STEM, socio-economic status, first-generation student, students from alternative care,) have been introduced in 2019. Out of the remaining several goals of the Plan, the following was accomplished:

-studies on educational experiences of underrepresented and vulnerable groups acquired (qualitative study),

-methodology for data collecting developed,

-a survey with HEIs on measures conducted,

-several joining policies developed, such as RPL (recognition of prior learning) guidelines, special student support for different groups of students (housing, Erasmus mobility addition, support in recognition procedures and language skills for refugee student, other).

Does your strategy (or: your set of measures) include **quantitative targets for certain target groups**? (e.g. raise the participiation of people with migrant background). If yes, please indicate them below and elaborate which data you use to monitor the acchievement of these targets and how this data is collected. If not, please give a short statement.

a.) No, our strategy/our set of measures does not include quantitative targets, because…

Can you name 3-4 examples of institutional best practices of higher education institutions having a concept of mainstreaming the SD (coherent set of measures, strategy; not only projects …)?

University of Rijeka

Websites/ main online sources for your core Social Dimension initiatives and/or strategy:

https://mzo.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//dokumenti/Obrazovanje/VisokoObrazovanje/RazvojVisokogObrazovanja//Nacionalni%20plan%20za%20unaprje%C4%91enje%20socijalne%20dimenzije%20visokog%20obrazovanja%20u%20Republici%20Hrvatskoj%202019.%20-%202021..pdf

https://mzo.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//dokumenti/Obrazovanje/VisokoObrazovanje/RazvojVisokogObrazovanja//Podzastupljene%20i%20ranjive%20skupine%20u%20visokom%20obrazovanju%20u%20Republici%20Hrvatskoj.pdf

https://mzo.gov.hr/UserDocsImages//dokumenti/Obrazovanje/VisokoObrazovanje/RazvojVisokogObrazovanja//Smjernice%20za%20unapre%C4%91enje%20sustava%20potpore%20studentima%20s%20invaliditetom%20u%20visokom%20obrazovanju%20u%20Republici%20Hrvatskoj.pdf

Links to other resources related to the Social Dimension of higher education (empirical studies, relevant events, video clips, documentaries …):

https://mzo.gov.hr/istaknute-teme/odgoj-i-obrazovanje/visoko-obrazovanje/razvoj-visokog-obrazovanja/nacionalni-plan-za-unaprjedjenje-socijalne-dimenzije-visokog-obrazovanja/1977

https://mzo.gov.hr/istaknute-teme/odgoj-i-obrazovanje/visoko-obrazovanje/razvoj-visokog-obrazovanja/sideral/233

Does/Did the Covid19 crisis have an influence on your endeavours to write or implement your national strategies on the social dimension? If yes, please describe the changes/challenges/benefits.

a) No

Country Survey

Country: Republic of Ireland

Authority in charge with "Social Dimension":

Person in charge/contact: Enda Hughes, Principal Officer, Head of Higher Education Equity of Access Section, Ministry of Further and Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation.

Rationale for your strategy: Why do you work on/with a national Strategy and/or a coherent set of measures and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension? Would you say that it addresses one or more of the principles mentioned in the introduction? If yes, which? (Indicate the numbers, e.g. Principle 6., Principle 10.)

Equity of access to higher education is a national priority for the Department of Further and Higher Education, Science, Innovation and Research and the Government, and the publication of periodic National Plans for Equity of Access to Higher Education, demonstrates the strong and clear commitment to building positive social change and tackling inequality in our society. The latest iteration of national stratety is as follows; National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2015–2021.

Ireland has developed a national strategy on the social dimension, which most of the principles mentioned in the introduction in order to provide a shared vision for a more equitable higher education sector. The national strategy provides a coherent framework to coordinate the efforts of relevant stakeholders. It also outlines roles and responsibilities for those stakeholders, and set targets for improvement in participation in higher education by underrepresented groups. The national strategy includes actions that are time bound and assigns responsibility for the completion of each action, thereby ensuring accountability for delivery. Higher Education Institutions are required to have their own access strategy which complements national policy.

The publication of National Access Plans every five to seven years offers us the opportunity to energise and renew our commitment to broadening participation in higher education from groups and communities who have been under-represented up to now – in particular, those living with social disadvantage, mature students, people with disabilities and Irish Travellers.

We have also found the national strategy a useful means of securing additional funding for our target groups, as additional resources may become available. Significant funding supports the implementation of the Plan;

- Dedicated resources - access office in the Department and the Higher Education Authority who have funding and policy advisory role

- Student financial support – number of targeted schemes with related structures including SUSI

- Financial incentives for HEIs - The annual core grant allocation by the HEA to higher

education institutions includes an access funding element which is based on specific access metrics. Respects Institutional Autonomy and enables access infrastructure within HEIs and dedicated Access Programmes

- New Funding stream to support innovative access initiatives – PATH fund

- Research

The development of National Access Plans takes place within the context of a range of other national anti-poverty and social inclusion policy measures in Ireland. A wide and on-going consultation with relevant Government Departments is in place to ensure alignment with cross-sectoral policies.   Annual forum with HEIs and stakeholders inform future actions and allows time and space to report progress and hear from stakeholders. Strategic dialogue process with HEIs provides a forum for on-going monitoring of progress.

The current national strategy will end in its current format in 2021 but will be updated by an improved version at that time. A consultation process will be form part of the planning for the new plan.

Does your national definition of "Social Dimension" correspond to the one above <u>quoted from the EHEA BFUG AG1 draft Principles and Guidelines?</u>

c.) Yes, it (mostly) corresponds, we define it as follows:

The current national strategy is entitled 'The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education, 2015-19'. The core vision is "*To ensure that the student body entering, participating in and completing Higher Education reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population.*"

Please give a short explanation of the status of your national strategy and/or your coherent set of measures and tools and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension (ongoing discussions, target groups involved, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, adjustments…)

The national strategy was published in December 2015. A "Progress Review of the National Access Plan and Priorities to 2021" published in 2018 extended the lifetime of the current plan to 2021. The current national strategy is entitled 'The National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education, 2015-'21. It targets 6 groups that are currently under-represented in Higher Education, as well as some sub-groups that are common to one or more of the main target groups. There are specific targets for each target group. The strategy contains 5 key goals and 28 actions. These actions will be progressed over the period to 2021.

How has your strategy been implemented; which measures have been put into practice and how?

Access to higher education is central to both the National Strategy for Higher Education to 2030 and to the Department's System Performance Framework for the Higher Education

System.

A Steering Group to oversee the implementation of the National Access Plan.The Group is chaired by the Ministry and the relevant organisations and stakeholder groups are represented on the National Steering Committee.

For each year of the National Access Plan an Annual National Forum reports progress to stakeholders on progress made under the Plan and provides an opportunity for wider stakeholders to feed into the priorities for the following year.

The process for the development of the current National Access Plan began in 2013 when the existing plan (the National Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education 2008–2013) was coming to the end of its term.

The approach taken in developing the Plan involved the following stages:

1   Data collection to establish figures on access and participation in higher education; and analysis of the data relating to access and participation.
2   Wide consultation with stakeholders in higher education and in the wider community; and analysis of the outcomes of the consultation process.
3   Development of the National Access Plan.
4   A progress Review of the National Access Plan was undertaken in 2018 and this culminated in an extension of the Plan by two years to 2021.

The overall strategy in relation to equity of access as set out in the overall strategic framework are articulated in National Access Plan. The third National Access Plan for Equity of Access to Higher Education (2015 – 2019) was launched in December 2015.

The vision of the National Access Plan is to ensure that the student body entering into, participating in and completing higher education at all levels reflects the diversity and social mix of Ireland's population.

The Plan identifies the target groups that are currently being under-represented in Higher Education, which includes entrants from socio-economic groups that have low participation in higher education, Irish Travellers, Students with disabilities, First time, mature student entrants, Part-time/flexible learners and further education award holders.

The plan has five goals as follows:

(1)   To mainstream the delivery of equity of access in HEIs.

(2) To assess the impact of current initiatives to support access.

 (3)   To gather accurate data on access and participation and to base policy on what that data tells us.

 (4)   To build coherent pathways from further education and to foster other entry routes to higher education.

 (5)   To develop regional and community partnership strategies for increasing access, with a particular focus on mentoring.

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Under each goals there are a set of 28 objectives with supporting actions. see National Plan for Equity of Access 2015-2019. and Progress Review of the National Access Plan and Priorities. Every HEI is required under the System Performance Framework to have in place a strategy for equity of access to higher education and to have associated metrics and evaluation approaches.

Does your strategy (or: your set of measures) include **quantitative targets for certain target groups**? (e.g. raise the participiation of people with migrant background). If yes, please indicate them below and elaborate which data you use to monitor the acchievement of these targets and how this data is collected. If not, please give a short statement.

Yes, the NAP identified six priority groups who have been underrepresented in higher education and set quantitative targets for each group: These are:
- Entrants from socio-economic groups that have low participation in higher education
- First time, mature students
- Students with disabilities
- Part-time / flexible learners
- Further education and training award holders
- Irish Travellers

Our Progress Review in 2018 acknowledges a number of significant positive developments and characterises the first phase of implementation of the NAP as a period of achievement and investment:

b.) A substantial increase in participation in the semi/unskilled manual worker group from 26% to 36% - exceeding the target of 35% for the lifetime of the NAP - a 10% increase in participation by this target group since the commencement of the Plan.

c.) The non-manual worker group increasing from 23% to 27% -the review concludes that the targets of 30% for the non-manual worker group will be achieved within the lifetime of the National Access Plan.

d.) The overall target for students with a disability of 8% that was set for the lifetime of the Plan has been exceeded with overall participation rate increased to 10%. Since the review, latest data shows this figure has further increased to 10.5%.

e.) The target of 22% surrounding part-time and flexible provision will pose a challenge to achieve, despite a marginal increase 0.8% increase since the commencement of the implementation of the Plan.

f.) Mature student participation has experienced a decline since the commencement of the implementation of the Plan. Participation has fallen from 13% to 9% for full-time students, and by 3% for full- and part-time students. With this information to hand we initiated a Mature Students Study which is currently being undertaken by external consultants.

g.) There has been a 17% increase in the numbers of irish travellers– from a baseline of 35 students. The aim for the lifetime of the plan is 80 and the progress review found 41.

In response to the progress review an Action Plan for Increased Traveller Participation in

Higher Education was published in 2019.

A Report on Mature Students is currently being prepared, and it will be published later in 2020.

An Access Data Plan was published in 2018. Under this plan, the HEA published a report in 2019 titled *"A Spatial and Socio-Economic Profile of Higher Education Institutions in Ireland".* The publication of this report marked a significant milestone in terms of evidenced based decision making which will help to inform the new targets for socio economic disadvantage in the next National Access Plan.

A new funding programme has been introduced called the Programme for Access to Higher education which support new innovation initiatives supporting students from the target groups

- ➢ New Innovative approaches – Piloting for three years(PATH 1 and 2 extended for a further 3 years)
- ➢ Clusters of HEIs - autonomy and flexibility
- ➢ Structured regional and community partnerships
- ➢ Targeted Bursary Fund
- ➢ A specific profession – teaching is targeted
- ➢ Supporting regional clusters of HEIs to develop regional and community partnerships strategies for access

Explicit quantitative and qualitative targets for each strand

Can you name 3-4 examples of institutional best practices of higher education institutions having a concept of mainstreaming the SD (coherent set of measures, strategy; not only projects …)?

As part of the annual strategic dialogue process, the Higher Education Authority, formally review the performance of each HEI on its agreed targets. In relation to equity of access, HEIs must be able to show the steps they are taking to advance the national priority for equity of access (specified in the Higher Education System Performance Framework) and how they are contributing to the goals, objectives and targets set out in this National Access Plan. The HEA also work with HEIs (including those participating in the Higher Education Access Route (HEAR) and Disability Access Route (DARE) schemes through the strategic dialogue and agreement of compacts process, to ensure that students from target groups and communities are more equitably represented across different disciplines and professions. Guidelines/regulations for funding schemes are reviewed and published every year

New initiatives and the assess of Impact of existing initiatives to support diversity in higher education provide on-going opportunities to adopt innovative and creative approaches to supporting diversity as we move increasing in the direction of diversity being the norm. A major element of both progress to date and the future implementation of the Plan has been

the increased investment in new access initiatives since the original publication of the National Access Plan. The Government has committed more than €38m in funding over six years as part of the Programme for Access to Higher Education Fund (PATH). Its three strands with their distinct focus on initial teacher education, bursaries for the most socio-economically disadvantaged students and building relationships between higher education institutions and regional community partners are a tangible commitment on the part of Government and the higher education system to supporting and further developing equity of access to higher education. The impact of PATH will be long-lasting and ensure better targeting of the most disadvantaged groups in Irish society. It will help set up new pathways to higher education, enhance supports for students and embed models of sustainable community engagement.

Websites/ main online sources for your core Social Dimension initiatives and/or strategy:

http://www.hea.ie/en/policy/national-access-office/national-plans-equity-access-higher-education/2015-2019-access-plan (National Access Plan, 2015-21)

Links to other resources related to the Social Dimension of higher education (empirical studies, relevant events, video clips, documentaries …):

https://hea.ie/assets/uploads/2019/01/HEA-Progress-Review-2021-NAP.pdf (Progress Review of the National Access Plan)

http://www.hea.ie/sites/default/files/safreport.pdf (Review of the Student Assistance Fund)

http://www.teachingandlearning.ie/forum-resources/national-forum-publications/ (This is the website of our National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning. This webpage focuses on the recent publications by the Forum which include reviews relating to non-completion, transition from Further Education into Higher Education, and Recognition of Prior Learning

https://hea.ie/2019/10/21/higher-education-spatial-socio-economic-profile-2017-18-enrolments-published/ (*A Spatial and Socio-Economic Profile of Higher Education Institutions in Ireland*)

Does/Did the Covid19 crisis have an influence on your endeavours to write or implement your national strategies on the social dimension? If yes, please describe the changes/challenges/benefits.

The Covid 19 crisis has had a detrimental effect on society as a whole but more so on the NAP target students in their ability to continue their higher education journey. It is profoundly affecting the students that are at risk of educational disadvantage as a result of imposed restrictions.

Since the crisis many stakeholder groups have held their own surveys to identify the extent

of the difficulties imposed on the students. The NAP Steering Group which was set up to oversee the implementation and to monitor the progress of the NAP have held additional meetings during the crisis.

Many groups have identified issues such as:

- IT and digital issues – lack of proper WiFi, sharing laptops with siblings
- Financial Stress – summer work not available for students
- Space issues – absence of Libraries and sharing with other siblings
- Mental Health issues

Priority responses include

❑   Financial Solutions

    ❑   Direct student supports necessary for student participation

    ❑   Scope for flexibilities in current approaches (e.g. FSD, SAF, PATH)

❑   IT Solutions

    ❑   Support for students through a loan system for laptops

❑   Mental Health and Social Interaction (also looking at space considerations)

    ❑   Wider than National Access Plan – additional resources provided.

❑   Rethinking Approaches to Access Strategies in HEIs

    ❑   Community of Practice to be set up

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Country Survey

Country: Scotland

Authority in charge with "Social Dimension": Scottish Government

Contact for PLA: Debra Macfarlane, Quality Assurance Agency Scotland

Rationale for your strategy: Do you work on/with a national Strategy and/or a coherent set of measures and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension? Would you say that it addresses one or more of the principles mentioned in the introduction? If yes, which? (Indicate the numbers, e.g. Principle 6., Principle 10.)

Yes, there is a national Strategy and key mechanisms for progressing work on inclusion and fair access, including:
- The Scottish Government National Performance Framework - The framework is for all of Scotland and aims to create a more successful country; give opportunities to all people living in Scotland; increase the wellbeing of people living in Scotland; create sustainable and inclusive growth; reduce inequalities and give equal importance to economic, environmental and social progress. One of the key pillars is inclusion and part of the purpose is to, 'reduce inequalities and give equal importance to economic, environmental and social progress'. The framework is not specific to HE but sets the context for the work outlined below. (P1, P4).
- A Blueprint for Fairness: The final report of the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA) 2016. This document presents a system wide plan to achieve equal access to higher education. The Scottish Government's Programme for Government 2014-15 set out the ambition that a child born at that time in one of Scotland's most deprived communities should, by the time of leaving school, have the same chance of going to university as one born in one of the country's least deprived areas. (P1, P2, P4, P6, P10).
- Scottish Framework for Fair Access - launched in May 2019 to respond to CoWA Recommendation 2 which seeks to identify access activity with the highest impact at each stage of the learner journey, from early learning through to higher education, and provide best practice guidelines on its delivery and evaluation. (P1, P4).
- Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Outcome Agreements - Outcome Agreements (OAs) set out what each University will aim to deliver in return for their funding. SFC expect continued and rapid progress with the implementation of the recommendations made by the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA). SFC outline that universities must ensure that good progress continues to be made towards achieving the targets set by the Commission and that these are clearly reflected in their OAs. (P1, P2, P4, P6, P10).
- Scottish Funding Council report on Widening Access 2018-19 (published 2020) – this report summarises the most recent data on CoWA targets, and on Scottish-domiciled entrants to higher and further education in Scotland by socio-economic deprivation, gender, ethnicity, disability, care experience and age.
- Quality Assurance Agency - Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) - Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) is an evidence-based method of cyclical

peer review of universities, meaning that staff and students from other institutions join a team of reviewers to assess what each higher education institution does on a five year cycle. ELIR results in a judgement and a set of commendations and recommendations relating to the way the institution is securing academic standards and improving the student experience, and to which the universities must respond. ELIR specifically considers the evidence available on institutional approaches to recognising and responding to equality and diversity in the student population, including widening access and mode and location of study. (P1, P4, P10).

Does your national definition of "Social Dimension" correspond to the one above <u>quoted from the EHEA BFUG AG1 draft Principles and Guidelines?</u>

- No, it does not completely correspond, we define it as follows: "A child born at that time (originally 2014-15) in one of Scotland's most deprived communities should, by the time of leaving school, have the same chance of going to university as one born in one of the country's least deprived areas".

Please give a short explanation of the status of your national strategy and/or your coherent set of measures and tools and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension (ongoing discussions, target groups involved, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, adjustments…)

b.) The national strategy was published in 2016 – see above for monitoring and evaluation (SFC OAs and reporting).

How has your strategy been implemented; which measures have been put into practice and how?

Yes, see above.

Does your strategy (or: your set of measures) include **quantitative targets for certain target groups**? (e.g. raise the participiation of people with migrant background). If yes, please indicate them below and elaborate which data you use to monitor the acchievement of these targets and how this data is collected. If not, please give a short statement.

h.) Yes, our strategy/our set of measures includes quantitative targets.

The following explicitly quantitative targets are set out in the Commission on Widening Access (CoWA) recommendations.

Recommendation 32 outlines targets: The Scottish Government and the Scottish Funding Council should implement the following targets to drive forward the delivery of equal access in Scotland: To realise the First Minister's ambition of equality of access to higher education in Scotland:

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- By 2030, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent 20% of entrants to higher education. Equality of access should be seen in both the college sector and the university sector.

To drive progress toward this goal:

- By 2021, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent at least 16% of full-time first degree entrants to Scottish HEIs as a whole.
- By 2021, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent at least 10% of full-time first degree entrants to every individual Scottish university.
- By 2026, students from the 20% most deprived backgrounds should represent at least 18% of full-time first degree entrants to Scottish universities as a whole.
- In 2022, the target of 10% for individual Scottish universities should be reviewed and a higher level target should be considered for the subsequent years.

Drilling down, CoWA Recommendations task the Scotttish Funding Council (SFC) with monitoring. Outcome Agreements between SFC and individual institutions set out specific annual targets for universities to achieve in order to receive their funding.

Can you name 3-4 examples of institutional best practices of higher education institutions having a concept of mainstreaming the SD (coherent set of measures, strategy; not only projects …)?

Over the current cycle of Enhancement-led Institutional Review (ELIR) 2018-21, 10 out of 18 institutions have been reviewed. The following institutions have been commended by peers for their approaches to widening participation (commendations are included below). Full reports citing the evidence used to come to the recommendation are available via the link above.

University of Aberdeen
Widening access - the University's strategic focus on widening access has resulted in the development of a broad range of activities and measures including pre and post-entry support, with students confirming they are positively supported and prepared to succeed with their studies.

Abertay University
Transition support into higher education – there is a deliberate and sustainable strategy for providing effective support to students entering the University from its partner colleges. This is demonstrated through its progression data and by the University's wide range of support activities including dedicated student transition officers, collaborative approaches to curriculum development and delivery, outreach work with local communities and the Teaching, Learning and Enhancement (TLE) team providing staff development opportunities for staff of the University's partners.

Edinburgh Napier University *(Note: Katrina Swanton, Head of Quality and Enhancement, will be attending the PLA)*
Strategic approach to widening participation - the sustained, strategic, systematic and evidence-based approach to widening participation and direct entry which is having a continued positive impact on the number of widening participation students admitted to

and progressing through the University. Effective interventions are evident at all stages of the learner journey from pre-admission through contextualised admissions arrangements to induction, transition and on-campus support. These include the student-led and University supported peer network of students from a widening participation background (Establish), the Countdown to Zero induction programme and introduction of dedicated widening participation student ambassadors.

University of Glasgow

Strategic approach to widening access - the University has a long-established strategic approach to widening access which it continues to develop through its engagement with a wide variety of stakeholders. Data and sector benchmarks are used effectively to underpin and inform the University's work in this area, which is helping students to succeed. Through its research-informed approach, the University is influencing the wider sector, for example, the University's 2016 Impact for Access Report includes findings which have informed Scottish Funding Council policy.

Queen Margaret University

Widening participation - The University's holistic and student-centred approach to widening participation represents excellent practice. Students are supported at each stage of their learner journey and the University's commitment both to widening participation and ensuring students succeed is demonstrated through the broad range of outreach activities it has in place. These include hosting the Children's University and working with schools, colleges, community groups, the third sector and voluntary agencies.

Royal Conservatoire of Scotland

Widening access - there is substantial strategic commitment and a range of support in place to promote student access to the Conservatoire. There is a wide variety of practical assistance for individual students provided on a systematic basis.

University of the West of Scotland

Widening access - the University demonstrates a strategic approach to recruiting and supporting a diverse range of students, based on a clear understanding of its student population and a strong commitment to meeting the needs of the communities in which it is located. A range of widening access initiatives are in place which are tailored to particular student groups including targeting engagement with areas designated as SIMD 20 and promoting partnership with local colleges to support student articulation. The University has made significant progress in improving the retention of students who enter from underrepresented groups

Websites/ main online sources for your core Social Dimension initiatives and/or strategy:

These are linked throughout this document, the main ones are outlined in the first section on rationale.

Links to other resources related to the Social Dimension of higher education (empirical studies, relevant events, video clips, documentaries …):

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Does/Did the Covid19 crisis have an influence on your endeavours to write or implement your national strategies on the social dimension? If yes, please describe the changes/challenges/benefits.

b) No. However, in September the Scottish Government published it's annual Programme for Government (PfG) 2020-21, setting out the actions the Government is taking to ensure Scotland's economic, health, and social recovery from the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic and beyond. The following points relating to HE and fair access were included:

- "Free education naturally gets re-protected, but "we know that the availability of free education by itself cannot overcome other inequalities". So we will continue to work to implement the recommendations of the Independent Commission on Widening Access, will build on work to scale up outreach activities and reform admissions to "reflect the potential" that a young person may have, and will continue to develop a "School Engagement Framework" to support pupils into the right choices – a modern apprenticeship, college, university, or employment.

- In the context of significant growth in the sector, the government will next year conduct a review of Purpose Built Student Accommodation in parallel with wider work to "ensure rent affordability" and "improving standards" across the private rented sector.

- It will continue to work with the Scottish Funding Council as it takes forward the recommendations of the Equality and Human Rights Commission's inquiry into racial harassment in British Universities published in 2019.

- On mental health, it will continue to deliver on its 2018 PfG commitment for more than 80 additional counsellors in colleges and universities over four years (it is currently over two-thirds of the way to meeting that commitment.)

- And it will work hard to salvage what it can from ongoing EU negotiations given "the collaborations that our universities have established with research partners across the continent."

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Country Survey

Country: Austria

Authority in charge with "Social Dimension": department IV/14 Higher Education Development

Person in charge/contact: Dr. Maria Keplinger

Rationale for your strategy: Why do you work on/with a national Strategy and/or a coherent set of measures and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension? Would you say that it addresses one or more of the principles mentioned in the introduction? If yes, which? (Indicate the numbers, e.g. Principle 6., Principle 10.)

Austria works with a national strategy because it was developed with the commitment of different stakeholders in Higher Education (Principle 10), and it is a useful frame of reference for institutional strategies and policy measures (Princeples 1, 2). The data that was needed to develop and evaluate the 9 quantitative targets, is mainly provided by the Student Social Survey that is commissioned by the ministry every 3-4 years (Principle 4).

Does your national definition of "Social Dimension" correspond to the one above quoted from the EHEA BFUG AG1 draft Principles and Guidelines?

d.) Yes, it (mostly) corresponds, we define it as follows: The goal formulated in the London Communiqué was the basis for our strategy development, we have expanded the definition as follows: *Participation in education and further training at all levels improves the potential for social, economic and political participation and integration in equal measure. In addition to ability and motivation, there are various other factors (e.g. regional and educational background, gender) that help or hinder access to education and training. These can be described as part of the "social dimension".* (National Strategy, page 7)

e.) No, it does not correspond, we define it as follows:

Please give a short explanation of the status of your national strategy and/or your coherent set of measures and tools and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension (ongoing discussions, target groups involved, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, adjustments…)

c.) The national strategy was published in Febrauary 2017; it is currently being implemented with an interim evaluation planned for 2021 and a final evaluation in 2025.

d.) No national strategy was published, because…

How has your strategy been implemented; which measures have been put into practice and how?

Steps of implementation were

- the integration of measures into the performance agreements with public universities (with the possibility to retain up to 0,5% of the global budget in case of non-implementation);
- the integration of the social dimension into the "Development and Funding Plan for Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS) through to 2023/24";
- connected to the narrative of the promotion of the SD on a national level was the

> quantitative and qualitative development of the student support system (focal
> points, funding); extra support for mobility
> - annual networking conferences:
>   - 2018 "Enabling study success"
>   - 2019 "From school into higher education"
>   - 2020 "webinar on equity in higher education" plus online networking
> - Participation in Erasmus+ project as partner, e.g. PLAR-4-SIMP (social inclusion in
>   mobility programmes)

Does your strategy (or: your set of measures) include **quantitative targets for certain target groups**? (e.g. raise the participiation of people with migrant background). If yes, please indicate them below and elaborate which data you use to monitor the acchievement of these targets and how this data is collected. If not, please give a short statement.

> i.) ==Yes,== our strategy/our set of measures includes quantitative targets
>   a. ==Including definite numbers/percentages== (e.g. increase the number of … to
>   5.300)
>   b. Describing trends/challenges (e.g. increase the number of …)
> j.) No, our strategy/our set of measures does not include quantitative targets,
>   because…

Can you name 3-4 examples of institutional best practices of higher education institutions having a concept of mainstreaming the SD (coherent set of measures, strategy; not only projects …)?

> - University of applied arts Vienna (institutional strategy; part of the performance
>   agreements with the ministry 2019-21)
> - University of applied sciences Upper Austria: keyword "Diversity Wheel"
> - University of applied sciences FH Campus Wien: keywords "code of conduct" and
>   "diversity map" (Landkarte)

Websites/ main online sources for your core Social Dimension initiatives and/or strategy:

> www.sozialerhebung.at/sozdim

Links to other resources related to the Social Dimension of higher education (empirical studies, relevant events, video clips, documentaries …):

> www.sozialerhebung.at
>
> www.plar4simp.eu

Does/Did the Covid19 crisis have an influence on your endeavours to write or implement your national strategies on the social dimension? If yes, please describe the changes/challenges/benefits.

> c) Yes: We had to cancel/postpone our national networking conference, which was
>   planned for Oct. 8th at the university of applied arts in Vienna
> d) No

Country Survey

Country: Belgium

Authority in charge with "Social Dimension":

Person in charge/contact: Patrick Willems, Policy advisor, Flemish Ministry of Education and Training, patrick.willems@ond.vlaanderen.be

Rationale for your strategy: Why do you work on/with a national Strategy and/or a coherent set of measures and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension? Would you say that it addresses one or more of the principles mentioned in the introduction? If yes, which? (Indicate the numbers, e.g. Principle 6., Principle 10.)

Policy objectives are:

- the composition of the student body entering, participating in and completing higher education at all levels should correspond to the heterogeneous social profile of society at large
- getting more young people to and through higher education in a way that promotes social cohesion, social mobility, 'democratisation of higher education' and that addresses the demographic trends;
- improving the attainment and achievement for those who are most at risk of failing in higher education programmes;
- reducing the educational attainment gap between the different groups participating in higher education.

Driving forces or rationales are:

- increasing the student numbers and the participation rates;
- the belief that a diverse student population enriches learning experiences;
- social justice: higher education has an important role to play in fostering equity and social justice to the wider society;
- contributing to social and economic development;
- tapping the pool of talent;
- participation in higher education is important because of its implications for an individual's chances in life.

Central to the policy is access to and participation in higher education, but also progression and success within it. It is not just about access to higher education but it is also about completion.

Principles of SD:

Principle 1: SD is not a central HE policy strategy, but an increasingly more important one. It has become much more central than it was a number of years ago. There is a distinct shift

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from a disadvantaged group based approach (SD as a periferic matter) to an overall inclusive approach (SD becomes more central in HE policy).

Principle 2: Flemish HEI have a large autonomy in developing their own SD strategies. The Flemish government provides for a general framework.

Principle 4: Flanders has some reliable data concerning some disadvantaged groups, but is trying to enlarge its datapool in dialogue with the HEI. At the end of 2017, a long debate and discussion resulted in all the Flemish HEI drawing up a Charter on collecting and monitoring data of disadvantaged groups in a uniform way. The Charter defines nine disadvantaged groups : students with a disability, students with a migration background, students newcomers, students with home language other than Dutch, students with other home language(s) besides Dutch, working students, grant students, near-grant students and students originating from a short-educated or medium-skilled environment.

HEI have since then collected data on their students from disadvantaged groups on the basis of the definitions as agreed upon in the Charter. Debate is currently going on about collecting these data in an already existing governmental HE database or in a database to be constructed by the umbrella organisations of the HEI. Central issue in the debate is the ownership of the data and privacy matters.

Principle 6: Extra funding has been set at the disposal of the HEI, beginning as a separate projectbased funding channel (Aanmoedigingsfonds/Social Dimension Support Fund), but quite soon integrated in the overall financing mechanism of HEI, giving the HEI a large financial autonomy towards further developing a genuine SD-policy (see also country profile 2017).

Principle 10: Government policy on SD has always been the result of a dialogue between all stakeholders (including HEI, students and social partners).

Does your national definition of "Social Dimension" correspond to the one above <u>quoted from the EHEA BFUG AG1 draft Principles and Guidelines?</u>

Yes, we endorse the SD definition in the Principles and Guidelines

Please give a short explanation of the status of your national strategy and/or your coherent set of measures and tools and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension (ongoing discussions, target groups involved, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, adjustments…)

Flanders has no national strategy with quantitative targets
Basics of our national strategy are:
- Flemish government provides a legal framework for HEI in which they are able to develop their own SD policy
- Flemish government offers a number of measures (financial or otherwise) to support HEI in the development of their SD policy
- The legal framework and other supportive measures are the result of a structural

How has your strategy been implemented; which measures have been put into practice and how?

Legal framework: number of laws passed in Parliament, following dialogue and debate with stakeholders

Funding for SD integrated in overall financing mechanism for HEI

Separate funding for student social services (embedded by law)

Lower tuition fees for scholarship students

An extra weighting factor (1.5) in the funding formula for students from a lower socio-economic background, disabled students and students who combine working with studying;

A number of small or specific funding/measures, including

- Project financing on student tutoring for disadvantaged groups;
- Development of tools for improving study choice of pupils venturing to enter HE;
- national aptitude test toolkit for new entrants allowing aspirant students to test/evaluate their motivation/interests/aspirations, their way of studying and learning, their preparedness for a particular discipline; the toolkit provides feedback to the aspirant and new students and the institutions offer remedial courses and activities;
- establishment by law and financing of support center for inclusive higher education (SIHO). SIHO supports HEI in developing an institutional policy on students with disabilities and supports the Flemish government in the development of a national policy on studying with a disability in HE.

Does your strategy (or: your set of measures) include **quantitative targets for certain target groups**? (e.g. raise the participiation of people with migrant background). If yes, please indicate them below and elaborate which data you use to monitor the acchievement of these targets and how this data is collected. If not, please give a short statement.

No, our strategy/our set of measures does not include quantitative targets, because following debates on the matter, HEI and the Flemish government prefer other approaches. There is one exception, namely in the case of participation in international mobility, where the target was set that in 2020 of all students that participate in international mobility 33% should come from disadvantaged groups (Action Plan Brains on the Move).

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Can you name 3-4 examples of institutional best practices of higher education institutions having a concept of mainstreaming the SD (coherent set of measures, strategy; not only projects …)?

SIHO: Support Center for Inclusive Higher Education

Most of our universities have a coherent set of measures and strategy, or are in the course of developing one. Very good examples are Artevelde University College of Applied Sciences, Ghent University, Antwerp University, ….

For more detailed info contact patrick.willems@ond.vlaanderen.be

Websites/ main online sources for your core Social Dimension initiatives and/or strategy:

Not much material is available in English, SIHO has an English webpage
https://www.siho.be/en

Links to other resources related to the Social Dimension of higher education (empirical studies, relevant events, video clips, documentaries …):

Does/Did the Covid19 crisis have an influence on your endeavours to write or implement your national strategies on the social dimension? If yes, please describe the changes/challenges/benefits.

It is still early to see the full impact of the COVIT 19 crisis on the further implementation of the SD strategy.

Country: Hungary

Authority in charge with "Social Dimension": Ministry for Innovation and Technology; Deputy State Secretariat for Higher Education.

Person in charge/contact: Dr. Laura Sinóros-Szabó head of Department for Strategy and Institutional Development in Higher Education; laura.sinoros-szabo@itm.gov.hu

Rationale for your strategy: Why do you work on/with a national Strategy and/or a coherent set of measures and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension? Would you say that it addresses one or more of the principles mentioned in the introduction? If yes, which? (Indicate the numbers, e.g. Principle 6., Principle 10.)

Social dimension and as a part of it inclusion are key elements of the "Shifting of Gears in Higher Education Mid-Term Policy Strategy" accepted by the Government in 2016 and it also appears in the regulatory environment and the domestic and EU funded programmes.

On 11 and 12 April 2019, the ET2020 working group organized a workshop to promote the integration of disadvantaged, under-represented target groups into higher education. The aim of the workshop was to explore tools available to higher education managers and higher education institutions to facilitate the integration of disadvantaged, under-represented target groups into higher education. Inclusive education is important for Hungary because educational inequality is associated with lower educational attainment, higher unemployment, lower social mobility and the spread of intergenerational poverty. According to analysis based on the Integration of Administrative Databases in the framework of the Graduate Tracking System of the Education Authority, in each of the years under review, it can be clearly seen that lower educational attainment levels mean lower domestic labour market activity, higher rates of stay abroad and higher presumed rates of stay abroad (not classified).

Also, the skills and abilities of the entire population need to be developed to address the challenges and exploit the opportunities of 21st century technologies. In view of all this, the Hungarian higher education policy field initiated a common thinking on social dimension in May 2020, the first step of which was to gather the groups of students from various higher education regulators and programs supported in some way. The ultimate goal and task of the cooperation is to review the existing equity higher education target groups, to redefine and expand them as necessary, and then to define policy measures following the review.

In the national higher education strategy it is stated that it is an essential expectation for any level of education to support social mobility, and consequently, in the strategy social inclusion is more related to ensuring accessibility to higher education. Equal opportunities to higher education are especially considered in disadvantaged regions. Examining the relationship between the disadvantaged and the higher education participation in Hungary, it can be stated that the place of residence and its characteristics have a significant influence on the willingness to apply for admission.

The strategy and its action plan address Principle 1., 2., 4., 6.

Does your national definition of "Social Dimension" correspond to the one above <u>quoted from the EHEA BFUG AG1 draft Principles and Guidelines?</u>

f.) Yes, it (mostly) corresponds, we define it as follows:

g.) <u>No, it does not correspond, we define it as follows:</u>

The strategy aims to increase participation and graduation rates in higher education for the low-income, under-represented and disadvantaged social groups by the following objectives and related measures:

- supporting student success

The measure improves the competence level of those admitted to a higher education institution. For lower achieving tertiary students as part of their studies catch-up courses will be launched to reduce drop-out and to improve the level of specialist knowledge required in the field. During the training competence measurement is required in order to monitor progress. To launch dropout reduction programs and student services, linguistic and professional skills development extracurricular courses is a priority.

- opportunity creation, social upliftment, wide access insuring education system

The Higher Education Information System of the Education Authority needs to be improved for intensive monitoring of the students concerned. The goal is to ensure national coverage of higher education service by maintaining all current training places and community higher education training centers. The restructuring of the scholarship system in order to contribute more effectively to access to higher education for disadvantaged young people in need, and thereby for their social mobility is also important. Another goal is to expand the network of Roma colleges.

Please give a short explanation of the status of your national strategy and/or your coherent set of measures and tools and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension (ongoing discussions, target groups involved, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, adjustments…)

e.) The national strategy was published in 2016. ("Shifting of Gears in Higher Education Mid-Term Policy Strategy (2016).) The action plan of higher education strategy for 2017-2020 was accepted in 2017 (1359/2017. (VI.12.) Government Decision).

f.) No national strategy was published, because…

How has your strategy been implemented; which measures have been put into practice and how?

The revision of the action plan 2017-2020 of the strategy is currently being undertaken. The action plan of higher education strategy for 2017-2020 was accepted in 2017 (1359/2017. (VI.12.) Government Decision). The Deputy State Secretariat for Higher Education is submitting a report for the Government on the implementation of the measures included in the action plan 2017-2020 in October 2020. We intend to submit the action plan for 2021-

Does your strategy (or: your set of measures) include **quantitative targets for certain target groups**? (e.g. raise the participiation of people with migrant background). If yes, please indicate them below and elaborate which data you use to monitor the acchievement of these targets and how this data is collected. If not, please give a short statement.

k.) Yes, our strategy/our set of measures includes quantitative targets
   a. Dropout rate decreases by 10 percentage points in basic and undivided training on average: 2013: 35%, 2023: 25%
   b. In Human Resources Development Operational Program: Proportion of disadvantaged students among graduates: Among the students who graduated in the given year, the proportion of graduates whose family background index was lower than -0.5 according to the data of the National Competence Survey. The family background index is recorded on the basis of the data recorded in the 10th grade during the National Competence Measurement. If the given student does not have a 10th grade CSHI index, the most recent data from the previous measurements is authoritative. 2015: 8,56 % 2023: 10%. (2017: 9,02%)
l.) No, our strategy/our set of measures does not include quantitative targets, because…

Can you name 3-4 examples of institutional best practices of higher education institutions having a concept of mainstreaming the SD (coherent set of measures, strategy; not only projects …)?

Let's Teach for Hungary! programme for social inclusion and sensitization was launched in December 2018 by the Ministry for Innovation and Technology and the Ministry of Human Capacities with the help of the Klebelsberg Center and the National Union of Students in Hungary. The program started in the 2019 /2020 academic year in Borsod, Szabolcs, Hajdú-Bihar and Baranya counties in fifty settlements. As part of this, students mentor 7 and 8 grade schoolchildren for a monthly grant of 30,000 forints. If student results improve, mentors can expect additional benefits. The 50 institutions participating in the program are selected from over 70 schools, in addition to the results of competency measurements, they consider the number of disadvantaged children with special educational needs in the institution. The program operates in an ascending system: in January 2019 the training of mentors started at 4 universities (University of Debrecen, University of Miskolc, University of Pécs, University of Nyíregyháza). Nearly 200 mentors worked with about 800 children. From January 2020, two more universities joined the program (Károly Eszterházy University, Eötvös Loránd University). In the 2020/21 school year, the goal is to further increase the number of mentors and mentees in order to enable students from as many small settlements as possible to join the program. The indicated cost requirement of the program is 269 796 195 HUF (754 548,03 EUR).

Websites/ main online sources for your core Social Dimension initiatives and/or strategy:

National Social Inclusion Strategy in Government Decree 1430/2011. (XII. 13.) and the Hungarian National Social Inclusion Strategy II. (MNTFS II.) : https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/assessment_implementation_hungary_national_strategy_2015_en.pdf

National Reform Program: https://ec.europa.eu/info/sites/info/files/2020-european-semester-convergence-programme-hungary_en.pdf

National Disability Program (2015-2025): https://www.kormany.hu/download/c/e4/60000/NDP_2015-2025.pdf#!DocumentBrowse

Shifting of Gears in Higher Education Mid-Term Policy Strategy 2016 : https://www.kormany.hu/download/8/19/d1000/Hungarian%20Higher%20Education%20Mid-Term%20Policy%20Strategy%202016-2030.pdf#!DocumentBrowse

Links to other resources related to the Social Dimension of higher education (empirical studies, relevant events, video clips, documentaries …):

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Does/Did the Covid19 crisis have an influence on your endeavours to write or implement your national strategies on the social dimension? If yes, please describe the changes/challenges/benefits.

e) Yes: The policy field collected the best practices on equitable access to distance and online education in May 2020. Most of the higher education institutions (HEIs) acted proactively and assessed (through a survey or other means) whether students need any help; some of the HEIs invited students to signal through the usual channels (disability coordinator, social committee etc.) if they need help, a few of them expected that students signals their needs if any (this was not a typical attitude).
A great number of HEIs offer personal help on a continuous basis for students; they are aware that this unprecedented situation causes different difficulties (also personal in nature) for students and they want to help their students beyond educational and learning problems. One of the factors affecting different HEIs' attitude is the number of students: for HEIs with a lower number of students measures are more personal in nature.
In the action plan of the higher education strategy for 2021-2024 the findings and results of the survey will be implemented.

f) No

Country Survey

Country: Romania

Authority in charge with "Social Dimension": Ministry of National Education

Person in charge/contact: Haj Mihai Cezar – cezar.haj@uefiscdi.ro

Rationale for your strategy: Why do you work on/with a national Strategy and/or a coherent set of measures and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension? Would you say that it addresses one or more of the principles mentioned in the introduction? If yes, which? (Indicate the numbers, e.g. Principle 6., Principle 10.)

I am currently coordinating a strategic project implemented by UEFISCDI and the Ministry of Education and Research aimed at increasing access and the completion of studies especially for students in vulnerable categories. I am also the Romanian delegate in the BFUG and member in the social dimension working group. The Romanian Strategy for Higher Education 2015-2020 addresses Principle 1, 4 and 10. The National Strategy for Tertiary Education 2015-2020 aims at improving tertiary education attainment, quality, and efficiency, and at making higher education more relevant to labour market needs and more accessible to disadvantaged groups. The vision for the development of tertiary education in Romania 2015-2020 is developed as an inter-related structure of support and pillars, which will be supported by several short, medium and long-term measures and initiatives.

Does your national definition of "Social Dimension" correspond to the one above quoted from the EHEA BFUG AG1 draft Principles and Guidelines?

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h.) Yes, it (mostly) corresponds, we define it as follows:
There is no official definition of the "social dimension" but the current national policy framework refer to the whole meaning of social dimension as defined by the BFUG.

i.) ~~No, it does not correspond, we define it as follows:~~

Please give a short explanation of the status of your national strategy and/or your coherent set of measures and tools and/or another way of mainstreaming Social Dimension (ongoing discussions, target groups involved, implementation, evaluation, monitoring, adjustments…)

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g.) The National Strategy for Tertiary Education is based on three pillars, one of which aims at: "improving participation in higher education" including concrete objectives and measures.
This Strategy includes important legislative initiatives and programs with impact on tertiary education such as coordination with Bologna Process reforms, improved autonomy for higher education institutions, new funding models.
The pillar that focuses on tertiary education attainment has, as objectives to:
- Establish clear routes from vocational and other secondary education into tertiary education;
- Complement merit-based fee waiver with a program of needbased grants

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program;
- Implement a student loan program;
- Encourage outreach to students from underrepresented groups and to nontraditional learners, including adults;
- Increase the transparency of information and provide guidance on educational opportunities and outcomes to inform study choices and reduce drop-out.

Following the strategic objectives, the following measures are proposed:
- Development of clear progression routes from vocational and other secondary education types into tertiary education;
- Strengthen the education pipeline;
- Improving the scholarship system, by increasing the number of needs-based social grants;
- Launching a student loan program;
- Encourage outreach to students from under-represented groups and to nontraditional learners, including adults by development of institutional outreach strategies for under-represented groups; national government to incentivize recruitment strategy and retention of under-represented groups by providing financial incentives for doing so; institutions can be encouraged to perform outreach and shift enrollment balances at a field-of-study level through financial incentives for meeting or exceeding certain enrollment thresholds.

At this moment there is no public report on the implementation but measures were taken by national institution in support of the social dimension and in accordance with the strategy.

h.) No national strategy was published, because...

How has your strategy been implemented; which measures have been put into practice and how?

The following measures have been put into practice:

1. **Enhancing the social scholarship system:** a new legal framework was adopted that better regulates the implementation of the scholarship system. Also, more money from the public budget was given to universities for scholarships. Due to this challenges, the values of social scholarships have increased.
2. **Financial incentives for students from disadvantaged groups:** a new policy was adopted that which involved allocation of budget funded study places for students that come from a rural high-school. For students from disadvantaged groups there are also other measures in place as, for example, the allocation of budgeted study places for roma students.
3. **New funding instrument (FDI – institutional development fund) was put in place.** Based on a competition, it funds universities projects that promote equity (http://www.cnfis.ro/finantare/dezvoltare-institutionala/) . Universities can fund local projects aimed at reducing the drop-out rate and enhancing access to higher education.
4. **Big infrastructure projects for new student dormitories –** the construction of 30 new students' dormitories has started.

5. **Implementing the ROSE (Romanian Secondary Education) project** – that has university-level-interventions aiming to support the needs of students at risk of dropping out. It has as activities: the development of summer bridge programs, implemented by faculties and the establishment of learning centers, for the benefit of the whole university, meant to increase the retention rate in higher education of at-risk students.

Does your strategy (or: your set of measures) include **quantitative targets for certain target groups**? (e.g. raise the participiation of people with migrant background). If yes, please indicate them below and elaborate which data you use to monitor the acchievement of these targets and how this data is collected. If not, please give a short statement.

m.) Yes, our strategy/our set of measures includes quantitative targets
   a.   Including definite percentages
-   Increase the share of the population with higher education in the population aged 25-34 will reach 29% by 2020 from 25,5% current reference; increase the share of population living in rural areas and completed tertiary education programs in the 30-34 year old population to reach 8.3% in 2020 from the current 7.8%; increase the share of female tertiary education graduates in science, mathematics and IT to reach 4.2% in 2020 from 3.1% of the current reference).

For the strategic objectives related to social dimension, there are the following targets:
-   Facilitating the transfer and career path of young people between various forms and levels of education, in particular from secondary education to higher education – 42.800 (number of beneficiaries)
-   Removing barriers to potential and current students to achieve their educational goals – 385.977 (number of beneficiaries)
-   Teacher training (for increasing participation to higher education) – 9.250
-   Counseling young people to make informed decisions about their professional path in tertiary education - 30.000 (number of beneficiaries)
-   Increasing the access and participation of disadvantaged groups in the higher education system (especially non-traditional students) – 50.000 (number of beneficiaries)

~~n.) No, our strategy/our set of measures does not include quantitative targets, because…~~

Can you name 3-4 examples of institutional best practices of higher education institutions having a concept of mainstreaming the SD (coherent set of measures, strategy; not only projects …)?

There are several measures put in place at university level to foster the social dimension of higher education such as:

-   Bridging measures and projects for improving the transition from high-school to

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university. Many universities offer free counselling and/or courses for high-school students in order to better perform at baccalaureate exam.
- Scholarships for certain under-represented groups (over the national social scholarship system funded from the Ministry of Education budget).
- Enhanced infrastructure for disabled students.
- More free study places for roma students (above the number allocated from national level).
- Tutoring programs for first-year students for better integrate them in the academic community.

Websites/ main online sources for your core Social Dimension initiatives and/or strategy:

https://www.edu.ro/sites/default/files/fisiere%20articole/Strategie_inv_tertiar_2015_2020.pdf , English version: http://pubdocs.worldbank.org/en/395381496304455206/National-Strategy-for-Tertiary-Education-in-Romania-mare.pdf

Ministry of Education - https://edu.ro/proiecte

The reports from the project "Educated Romania" implemented by the Presidential Administration - http://www.romaniaeducata.eu/rezultatele-proiectului/ ; English details: https://www.presidency.ro/en/commitments/educated-romania

Publications on HE (include policy briefs on access and participation) from UEFISCDI- https://uefiscdi.gov.ro/index.php

ROSE project - http://proiecte.pmu.ro/web/guest/rose

Links to other resources related to the Social Dimension of higher education (empirical studies, relevant events, video clips, documentaries …):

Publications from a national strategic project ("Higher Education Evidence Based Policy Making: a necessary premise for progress in Romania" project) implemented by UEFISCDI- http://pp-is.forhe.ro/ro/rezultate

The equity component of another national project ("Internationalization, equity and university management") implemented by UEFISCDI- http://iemu.forhe.ro/echitate/rezultate-obtinute/

Does/Did the Covid19 crisis have an influence on your endeavours to write or implement your national strategies on the social dimension? If yes, please describe the changes/challenges/benefits.

g) Yes:
h) **No**